

The Proposed Warm-water and Native Aquatic Species Hatchery

Update on Issues and Addition of a New Alternative

June 2002

The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, a federal agency, and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources propose to fund construction of a new warm-water hatchery, the location of which remains to be determined. A draft Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared for the proposal.

In this newsletter:

- Limiting use of the Gandy Warm Springs water supply is incorporated into the proposal to build a hatchery at the site.
- An alternative site for the warm-water hatchery has been introduced and will be evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. An updated schedule is presented.
- An interim hatchery at Goshen Warm Springs in Utah County is proposed.

New Alternative Added: Goshen Warm Springs Site

A new alternative for a warm water hatchery site to be evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is at Goshen Warm Springs in Utah County. This alternative was previously eliminated from further consideration, but now will be analyzed.

As with the Gandy Warm Springs site, issues associated with Goshen Warm Springs will be evaluated and site-specific studies conducted to evaluate environmental impacts. Both alternative sites, along with a “no action” alternative, will be evaluated as to their ability to meet the need of providing warm-water fish and amphibians to help recover and conserve native species.

Use of the Gandy Warm Springs water supply

Gandy residents and the general public use the Gandy Warm Springs area, particularly the spring pond and associated cave. It is used for recreation, baptisms and drinking water.

In October, 2001 a consulting fish health specialist and Division of Wildlife Resources fish pathologist visited the site. They gave their recommendation on use of the spring with the proposed hatchery.

Both experts found that leaving the spring and pond open to the public would present significant risks to fish health. Risks could be either from deliberate or accidental introduction of pollutants or disease organisms.

Given their recommendations, the proposed action to build a warm-water hatchery in the Gandy Warm Springs area will include:

- securing the water supply by fencing it, and
- no general public access to the spring pond area.

These items will be included in the environmental analysis of the proposal. Ways of providing public use in the area will be explored.



Goshen Warm Springs Site, continued

We anticipate analysis of constructing a hatchery at Goshen Warm Springs will raise many of the same questions and issues that were identified with the Gandy Warm Springs site. Based on Gandy site issues, we have compiled a preliminary list for Goshen. We will be contacting you to identify additional Goshen Warm Springs issues:

Public access and recreational use: How will this alternative change public use of the area?

Water quality impacts: How will this alternative change the water quality of Goshen Warm Springs Irrigation Ditch?

Site specific impacts: How might this alternative impact aquatic and riparian resources of Goshen Warm Springs and adjacent areas?

Exotic species: How would non-native, or exotic, species raised in the hatchery impact native species naturally occurring in the area?

Amphibian program: Shouldn't amphibians be raised in cold-water hatcheries in their native drainages, rather than in a warm-water hatchery?

Fish Health: How might this proposed hatchery affect the health and condition of fish and amphibians raised there, the health of wild fish in the water supply and in waters to be stocked by the hatchery?

Bird or other predation on fish: How might this proposed hatchery attract predators and how will they be controlled?

Avian (birds) and power line interactions: How might any new power lines associated with this project increase bird electrocutions in the area?

Economic benefits: How will the proposed hatchery provide employment opportunities for local residents?

Educational benefits: How will the hatchery benefit school groups and the public in general?

Need for the proposed Hatchery: Is building this hatchery necessary; why not use existing facilities either in the private sector or otherwise?

Interim Hatchery Also Considered at Goshen Warm Springs

The proposed warm-water hatchery's purpose is to culture fish and amphibians to help recover and conserve native species; however, between studies, design and construction, it may take up to 8 years to fully meet that need.

One of the species to be grown in the new hatchery is the endangered June sucker, and its recovery can not wait. So, for the interim, a smaller hatchery is proposed at Goshen Warm Springs in Utah County.

This "interim hatchery" is not the same as what is proposed in the "Goshen Warm Springs Alternative" described in this newsletter. This facility would be a small building and would be built very quickly. Because the building's construction would be partially federally funded, an environmental analysis is also needed to build it. We will request public input to this proposal soon.

Still planned.....

The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed warm-water hatchery will be distributed for public review and comment. The EIS will include answers to questions and response to issues summarized here. You will receive continued updates on the process. The proposed new schedule is: draft EIS, May 2003; final EIS and decision notice, July 2003.

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